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ALASKA People



May/June 1998



Bunny Takes It!!

Hydrologist Gets Federal Employee of the Year Award for Community Work

Bunny Sterin was canoeing down the Little Susitna River with members of the River Management Society when it was announced that she was a winner at this year's Employee of the Year ceremonies.

Sterin received the award for her volunteer work in developing safety policies and practices for local search and rescue teams and instructing numerous courses on rafting and rescue techniques. Sterin's volunteer efforts fall in the areas of water safety and outdoor emergency care.

Known as a local expert in swift water rescue techniques, she recently developed and conducted

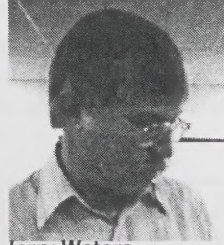
a rescue boater program for the Anchorage Fire Department. She also planned and evaluated mock rescue scenarios for the Anchorage Fire Department and other rescue groups. She helped develop the University of Alaska Wilderness studies water-based curriculum course, is a rafting and sea kayaking instructor with Knik Canoe and Kayakers and is chairperson for the Eagle River Task Group.

Sterin received a plaque, an \$100 bond, and congratulatory letters from senators Stevens and Murkowski, but she says, "I love what I do, and it's nice to be recognized for what I do outside of work."

Employee Says "No"— Gets AWARD!

by Andy Williams

When your national director and other VIPs are in Barrow waiting to fly over the National Petroleum Reserve-Alaska in a helicopter, it's not easy to tell them they can't go. Jerry Waters, aviation service officer with the Alaska Fire Service, did that during a Sept. '97 trip with BLM Director Pat Shea, Alaska SD Tom Allen and Northern DM Dee Ritchie. For this, he received a special aviation safety award from the USDI Office of Aircraft Services and the BLM National Office of Fire and Aviation. Waters said the weather was marginal and below minimums for the aircraft involved. The award commends Waters "for his desire to put safety of the people first and stand by his decision."



Dan Gullickson

Jerry Waters

Andy Williams is a writer-editor with the Northern District Public Affairs.

Other BLM Federal Employee of the Year Nominees	
CATEGORY 1 -	Dorothy Bonds, budget assistant, Anchorage Field Office
CATEGORY 2 -	Steve Flippen, land law examiner, Div. of Conveyance Mgmt.
CATEGORY 3 -	Gary Reimer, Deputy Authorized Officer, Joint Pipeline Office
TEAM CATEGORY -	State selection team - Bruce Duffy (lead), Rena Baker, Joan Biggs, Glenn Elliott, Lori Fitzsimons, Clem Florez, Rebecca Johnson, Judy Kelley, Margaret McDaniel, Virginia Spacer, Linda Resseguie,



DiVeRSiTy



Been There, Heard That?



No matter how you present it, the topic of diversity gets attention. Anyone attending the Department of Interior's one-day diversity symposium in April can attest to that.

Facts about the under-representation of women and minorities in certain job categories were hammered over and over. But perhaps the most sobering statistic was that DOI reported no change in the diversity of its workforce for the last 10 years. A DOI statistical profile report supports this with comprehensive data on the demographics and occupational trends of its workforce.

Washington office officials like Mike Dole from DOI's Office for Equal Opportunity, and Mari Barr, Deputy Asst. Secretary for Human Resource Management implored

the hundreds of managers at the Anchorage symposium that something dramatic has to be done. How dramatic? David Montoya, Deputy Assistant for Workforce Diversity introduced a new strategic plan aimed at improving DOI's diversity. This plan focuses on diverse workforce strategic planning, targeted recruitment, retention, and employee quality of life and accountability issues.

Deborah Williams, the Secretary of Interior's representative, said that diversity of the workforce is the right thing to do. But it goes beyond that; the demographics of the United States are changing. For its corporate survival and its ability to weather technological advancements, the DOI workforce must become more diverse.

Some practical advice given to managers who will lead the efforts to diversify our workforce include the following:

- establish a partnership with Human Resources
- consult early with Equal Employment Office (EEO)
- conduct or participate in job fairs
- plan recruitment strategies
- use EEO as monitor/pulse of the workforce
- periodically check with personnel about actions, determine trends
- seek and understand why grievances are happening
- attend EEO/HRM supervisory training
- keep abreast of policies, regulations
- be aware of employee relationships between family and work life issues
- share and coach employees
- find out what motivates employees/ promote and encourage skills development/ be willing to adjust work schedules

Fire Service is All Warmed Up

A new Type 1 fire-fighting crew is geared up and ready to go. The Denali Hotshots joined two other nationally designated hotshot crews based in Alaska. Hotshot crews are skilled, trained and experienced firefighters who are used when highly technical and difficult tasks need to be done on wildland fires. There are 68 Type I crews in the nation.



Steppin' Won't Do it Anymore

by Allen Williams

Test Has Firefighters Packing Instead of Stepping

The pack test replaced the step test for Alaska wildland firefighters this year. The new work capacity test is designed to measure aerobic capacity, muscular strength and muscular endurance for arduous, moderate and light physical workloads. All red-carded individuals must walk for three miles with a 45-pound pack in 45 minutes or less for an arduous rating, walk two miles with a 25-

pound pack in 30 minutes or less for a moderate rating, or walk one mile with no pack in 16 minutes or less for a light rating.

The test is given to all emergency firefighters, all federal and state of Alaska employees who are available for fire assignments. The Galena Zone, which administers about one-third of the 73 emergency firefighter crews in the state, expects to test 1,700 people. **Allen Biller**, assistant fire management officer, said more people took the work test this year than when the step test was offered and more people qualified to be firefighters.

by Scott Guyer

Since you've been putting money into the retirement Thrift Fund you may be paying more attention to the stock market too. Feeling uninformed? Confused about "bears," "bulls" and PE ratios? Well don't feel alone. The stock market is a complicated and ever changing beast that even the professionals have trouble keeping up with. Here are three of the biggest mistakes common to new investors.

Inability to Save - perhaps the biggest mistake a small investor can make is not saving enough. Living within your means might not be enough to provide for a comfortable retirement. A person who does not adequately save and invest for retirement will either have to work during retirement years or live solely off his/her Social Security or pension.

Assessing Risk - Most new investors have risk phobia. They have visions of the stock market crashes of '29 and '87. Consequently, investing their nest egg in government bonds or federally insured savings accounts seems to be the only option. However, while the stock market is anything but guaranteed, it has

The 3 Biggest Investment MISTAKES



historical returns of more than 10 percent per year during the past 60 years and nearly 20 percent since 1982. This return dwarfs the return on government securities over the same period.

Asset Allocation - Following right along with risk intolerance is inadequate asset allocation. The risk adverse group that is prone to investing in highly secured government bonds may only squeak out a few dollars here or there for a riskier investment. Professionals agree that proper asset allocation is determined by subtracting your age from 100 and investing this percentage

of available dollars in stocks and stock mutual funds. The rest should be invested in fixed income instruments, such as bonds and government securities. Simply put, the younger you are, the more money you should have in the stock market to achieve greater returns. The great thing about making investment mistakes is that they are not permanent. *Scott Guyer is a biologist with the Division of Cadastral Survey and earned a MBA from the University of Alaska.*

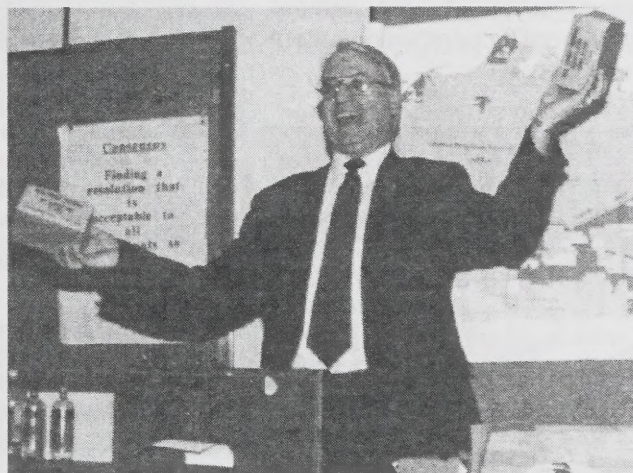
Ritchie Retires after 40 Years

by Sharon Wilson

On April 3, Dee Ritchie retired from the BLM after 40 years of federal service. To honor the occasion, more than 100 BLMers, state and federal employees and private citizens attended a potluck and roast at the Northern Field Office.

Ritchie became the Arctic District Manager in Fairbanks in 1990, then became the Northern District Manager after three districts were combined. He built solid working relationships with external BLM customers in Northern rural communities from Barrow to Nome to Eagle.

Active in Boy Scouts of America, Ritchie encouraged all seven of his sons to become scouts and was thrilled when they all achieve the rank of Eagle Scout. Ritchie was the Vice President for Bush Scouting for the Midnight Sun Council and helped improve the scouting programs of Barrow, Kotzebue and Nome. He earned a bachelor's degree in Forest, Range and Wildlife Management, a masters degree in Range



Dan Gullickson

An elated Dee Ritchie at his retirement party.

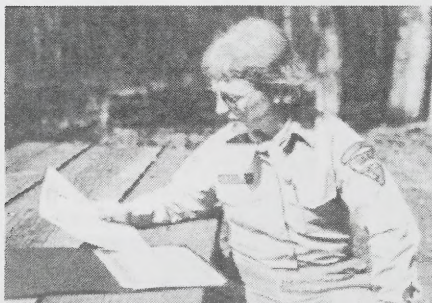
Management and Plant Pathology, and was a PhD candidate in Public Administration. Prior to working in Fairbanks, he worked in Washington, D.C. but Alaska was a natural fit for Ritchie with his "aw shucks manner", and his keen interests in hunting, fishing, and traveling. Ritchie and his wife, Elizabeth will retire in Utah. *Sharon Wilson is lead public affairs officer in the Northern District.*

Money Goes for Intertribal Crew.

Funds for the new interagency, intertribal fire crew were provided in the U.S. Department of Interior's 1998 appropriation through the efforts of Sen. Ted Stevens and the Alaska's congressional delegation. After soliciting proposals from tribal organizations throughout Alaska, the Alaska Fire Service signed a cooperative agreement with Chugachmiut, a non-profit Alaska Native corporation in Anchorage, to co-manage the 20-member intertribal crew. Under the agreement, Chugachmiut assists with the administrative support of the crew and the AFS assists with the operational assignments, training and facilities.

Realty Specialist Receives Award From Peers.

Central Yukon Team realty specialist **Betsy Bonnell**, in the Northern Field Office, received an award from the Alaska State Office ANCSA Team for completing easement work for approximately 400,000 acres of land near Birch Creek, Alaska. Bonnell's work enables the ANCSA Team to meet a FY 98 goal by completing patent of the land.



Betsy Bonnell

Geologist is Peace Corp Bound.

Craig McCaa, geologist with the Northern Field Office, leaves in June to begin a tour with the Peace Corps in the Ukraine. McCaa will take 12 weeks of training near Kiev and then work two years in an environmental education program in the Texas-size former Soviet republic. He won't know where he

will be working or whether his assignment will be with a school, government agency or non-governmental organization until he gets there. McCaa joined the BLM in Carson City, Nev. in 1990 and has worked with the NFO for nearly four years.

Fly a Flag and They Will Come.

It's that time of the year . . . seems the Anchorage Federal Building security guards had their hands full when a busload of tourists who arrived at the Federal Building front door. Their bus driver was sup-

posed to let them off at the Anchorage Museum across the street. But all big buildings look alike, right? It was the driver's first day on the job and first time in Alaska. No doubt he'll be teased all summer.

RAPS ALERT!! Host families are desperately needed to provide food and lodging for students participating in this summer's RAPS program. Call Mike Johnson at 267-1494 for information.

Front cover graphic - El Nino was responsible for Alaska's early breakup but now we're dealing with a rainy, cloudy spring.

Cool



Conveyance Branch Makes Quilt for Ailing Co-worker. Between chemotherapy treatments, **Gary Cunningham** came in to visit his co-workers at the Alaska State Office only to be greeted with a quilt made by his friends. The quilt was meant to lift his spirits and **Kathy Flippen** says, "show Gary how much we love him." (l-r) **Dave Lavimodiere, Jennifer Lind, Margaret McDaniels, Jenice Pruitt, Susan Joyce, Carolyn Bailey, Kathy Flippen, Christie Favorite, Pat Moore, Glenn Elliott, Debbie Thomas, Robin Middleton.** Front- **Nancy Larson, Gary, Diane Wendling, Bob Perry, Terry Hassett.**

News

Activity Draws Students Attention to Bird Programs. When **Michelle "Missy" Fisk** was asked to design a new children's activity for the annual Fairbanks Outdoors recreation show in Fairbanks, she came up with a bird coloring contest. The activity was well-received with contest winners selected in four age categories. Fisk says, the hands-on activity brings public attention to local and international bird programs. Fisk, temporary wildlife technician on the Northwest Team in the Northern Field Office, collected materials and prizes from local businesses and nonprofit organizations. The three-day event was held at the Carlson Hall in May.

Winning sketches are featured on the Northern Field Office website at <http://aurora.ak.blm.gov/birds>.

C Street Gets Cleanup.

Fourteen Anchorage BLMers took a break from their jobs at the Federal Building April 24 to spend a couple hours picking up trash along C Street. Six years ago, ASO employees adopted this stretch of street between 10th and 36th avenues. Under the Adopt-a-Highway Program, employees collect trash along the adopted route three times throughout the summer. Field office employees in Anchorage, Glennallen and Fairbanks have adopted roads too. "We adopted C Street in 199, but it doesn't seem like we've worked it that long," said Conveyances land law examiner **Kathy Flippen**, who coordinates the event.

Dan Gullickson



Missy Fisk pets duck held by Randi Jandt.



Surrounded by all the entries in BLM's first art show are (l-r) Laura Lagstrom Doug Gibson and Dot Tideman who helped organize the event.

Arts Exhibit Is a Hit. More than 100 items from BLMers were on display at the Anchorage Federal Building, March 31-April 1. Items included quilts, sculpture, stained glass, ceramics, photography, and paintings. The People's Choice Award went to **Kim Mincer** for her stained glass of multi-colored leaves and her graphite painting on mylar of a human skull.

Here Come the Seasonals and Volunteers! At this time of the year, seasonal staff and volunteers at the Glennallen Field Office are outnumbering the permanent, full time staff. Outdoor recreation planner **Marcia Butorac**, who recruits most of the seasonals, and coordinates annual orientation and safety training says, "A great deal of time and energy goes into the recruitment, training and ongoing support for a seasonal and volunteer program, but that effort is well justified. By the end of this season, these people will have logged more than 6,000 work hours. Visitors to the campgrounds will have been served, our Wild and Scenic River corridors will be cleaned, and we will have collected the data we need to help improve service for future visitors."

Volunteer campground hosts **Gene and Charlotte Stanton** of Horseshoe Bend, Arkansas, are returning for a second year at the Paxson Lake Campground, **Ray Rutler** and **Evelyn Hayes** of Eugene, Oregon, are at the Brushkana Creek Campground, and **Martha Hanns** of LaCenter, Washington, is at the Sourdough Creek Campground. **Melvin Slocum** and **Pamela Wood** of Benson, Arizona will serve as hosts at the Tangle Lakes campground.

Student Conservation Association volunteers for realty and natural resources are **Mandy Elizabeth Godown**, of Nixa, Missouri, and **James E. Bromberg**, of New York City.

Student Conservation Association volunteers for recreation are **Luis German Currea** of Tampa, Florida, **KJ Faivre** of DeKalb, Illinois, and **Chris Oswalt** of Knoxville, Tennessee.

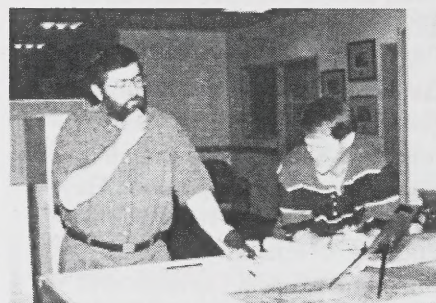
Seasonal recreation technicians are **Walt Maslen** of Wisdom, Montana, and **Brian Raper** of Twenty Nine Palms, California. Seasonal outdoor recreation planner **Brad Seifert** of Glennallen is as a crew leader. Seifert previously served in volunteer and seasonal staff positions last year.

Short Summer Keeps Engineering BBBusy

by Sharon Wilson



Anchorage Engineering includes (l-r) **John Miller, Jim Andrews, Cheryl Roland, Judy Beckhorn-Ross**. Not pictured is the maintenance staff which includes **Ned Darling, Michael Carlton, Darryl Coates, Bobby Johnson, Jim Whitman, Tony Williams**



Fairbanks engineers (l-r) **Curt Fortenberry and Rodd Morotz**. The Fairbanks engineering staff also includes **Roger Evans and Darrell Nielsen** (not pictured).

It's always busy in the Engineering shop. **Curt Fortenberry** explains, "One thing that keeps us moving fast is the short summer field season in northern Alaska, especially on the Dalton Highway. We try to complete our surveys and evaluate project sites before the snow falls, and it keeps us hopping."

Fortenberry is BLM's lead engineer in Fairbanks who reports to **Jim Andrews** in Anchorage.

Until the end of this month, before he retires, the Engineering program has been managed by branch chief Jim Andrews.

Four engineers work out of the BLM's Fairbanks office while Andrews and two other engineers and an assistant operate out of the Campbell Tract Facility in Anchorage. A maintenance staff of four also resides at the CTF.

The staffs do major contract projects, new construction, recreation site and campground design, bridge safety inspections and provide technical assistance to

facility maintenance staff.

The most recent large project completed by the Fairbanks engineering team was the design of the Nome Creek Road and its associated campgrounds and waysides in the White Mountain National Recreation Area. Another major project was a \$2 million renovation to the AFS headquarters building on Fort Wainwright.

The engineers complete basic design work and specifications for Intermodal Surface Transportation and Enhancements Act (ISTEA) projects that will be done by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities on BLM-managed public land. They also assist in reclamation of mining sites, design roads and coordinate aerial photography of Alaska.

Because the Fairbanks engineers work somewhat independently in a team, having a supervisor 400 miles away in Anchorage has never been a problem. Fortenberry explained, with a laugh, "We always like to tell Jim Andrews that we like working for him in Anchorage."

Health

Ulcer germ suspect in heart disease

Growing evidence suggests the ulcer causing bacterium *Helicobacter pylori* may play a role in the development of heart disease. A new Italian study found that men with heart disease were significantly more likely to be infected with the ulcer-causing *H. pylori* than men with no evidence of heart disease. The study found that 62% of the

men with heart disease were infected with *H. pylori* while 40% were not. Also, the men with heart disease were four times more likely to have a more virulent form of *H. pylori* than those without the disease. Study results support a theory that *H. pylori* infection may influence the development of heart disease through low-grade, persistent inflammatory stimulation.

The discovery of *H. pylori* is ranked by

many in the medical world as one of the most important discoveries of this century.

However, these findings don't change the standard risk factors for heart disease which are smoking, high blood pressure and elevated blood cholesterol.

Source: The Washington Post, American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy

Employee Profile

If it's plans for recreation camp-grounds to electrical wiring to sewers, sooner or later it'll have to go through Jim Andrews, Chief of Engineering for BLM-Alaska. But not for long, after 36 years with the Bureau, Andrews is calling it quits this month.

It all began in 1962. That's when he graduated from Colorado State University, got his first federal job as an engineering lab technician and then his second federal job as an engineer with the BLM. Through the years, he's worked for the Carson City and Shoshone districts, and Oregon State Office before coming to the Alaska State Office in 1990.

Andrews says he was born and raised in northeast Colorado during the dark ages. His most interesting work involved designing anadromous fish habitat improvements and creating seed orchards, both in Oregon. However, he says all his projects in Alaska have been interesting.

Andrews, is married to Tippi, has two grown married daughters and doesn't have any plans after he retires.



James "Jim" Andrews Chief, Branch of Engineering



How long have you lived in Alaska?
Eight years.

What do you enjoy most about your job? Being an active participant in the planning, designing and constructing of facilities for the Bureau.

What is the last book you've read (or are currently reading)? *I'm Not Making This Up* by Dave Barry.

What is your idea of a good time? There are so many activities I enjoy. It is difficult to single out any one thing. A few things that come to mind are accompanying my wife skiing, clay target shooting (sporting clays, trap and skeet), fishing . . .

What was your favorite job? Chief, Branch of Engineering Services, Alaska

If you had one year to live, what would you do? Probably not change much of anything that I am presently doing.

Name one thing which people would be surprised to know about you? I can't think of anything. I pretty much subscribe to the philosophy of there are no secrets, what you see is what you get.

What does your "ultimate meal" consist of? King crab and shrimp.

What bad habit would you like to break? Getting up early, going to

work and staying there for far too long each day. I plan to cure this affliction in the very near future.

What is your favorite place? Right now, Alaska

What is the most important thing you've learned since working for the BLM? There are few things that are truly new in the BLM arena, except technology and methodology. What is often perceived as "new and different" ways of doing business is usually only in the minds of new and different people. My first BLM supervisor once told me, "the pendulum swings both ways; your job is to foresee the direction it is swinging, and to never let it hit you in the back of your head. I do have a few lumps, but so far they are not on the back of my head."

What should the BLM do to create a more diverse workforce?



Mike Johnson,
RAP Coordinator
Anchorage Field Office

To get a good number of diverse, qualified job applicants, managers will need to literally get out of the office and go to the universities or tribal organizations, etc. and talk about the agency, its vacancies and upcoming vacancies. If we could advertise jobs in various newspapers around the state that would be great. The bottom line is to "beat the bushes" to find the quality people. They're out there; we just need to make the effort to find them...

Dan Gullickson



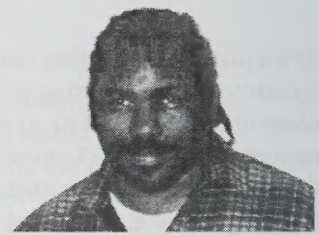
Kathy Cullings,
Chief, Br. Information Sys.
Alaska Fire Service

I believe that one very simple way is to make it easier to apply for a job. Simplify the application process, and hold workshops in high schools and colleges on how to best fill out an application for different types of work. Tell them what the process is and what the rater is specifically looking for and provide instruction as to how to best represent oneself in the process of the application.



Ramone Garcia-S,
Contact representative,
Public Information Center,
Alaska State Office

Work with a lot of different people, enjoy their differences, and understand that diversity in our workplace is life and it's wonderful.



Bobby Hollis,Electronic
Digital Comp. Mechanic
Br. Info Technology Svcs.
Alaska State Office

For BLM to create a more diverse workforce, it would have to expose its mission to all American communities equally and recruit from them. BLM must eliminate prejudices, categorizing, favoritism, and then participate in fair practices, regardless of the opposition. Accept the fact where BLM is now! and start from here. BLM must start with a 200% effort, individual, team, Bureau-wide, and lead by example. BLM must have a dream, a goal, and a plan.

Alaska People

Bureau of Land Management
222 West 7th Avenue, #13
Anchorage, Alaska 99513-7599
tele. 907.271.3335

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Danielle Allen
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Denver Federal Center
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